The War That Would Change Everything

The French and Indian War was a result of conflict between Britain and France over territory disputes in the Ohio River Valley. When the war ended in 1763 with the Treaty of Paris, Britain was very successful in gaining a vast amount of territory in North America. Meanwhile, the colonies saw a very different end to the war in that Britain used those gains to attempt to bring the colonies back under imperial rule. The French and Indian War was a major turning point in American relations with Great Britain. While religion, mercantilism, jobs, and the presence of loyalists were relatively unchanged, the war lead to the end of salutary neglect, the beginning of extensive taxation, a change in land policy, and a more patriotic mindset.

During the time of the French and Indian war, there were many European nations fighting for land claims in the New World. With the South Atlantic Trade System, those nations wanted access and control over that trade so as to have great economic advances. The colonies were very successful in managing their transatlantic trade, so of course other nations would want to challenge the primarily British control over them. The Enlightenment was also a monumental movement occurring throughout the French and Indian War. This would shape the way people began to think and would therein affect the beliefs and ideas the colonies had regarding those invading their area.
Because it essentially catapulted the cause for the American Revolution, the French and Indian War was a very significant turning point in American relations with Great Britain. After the war, Great Britain began to attempt to reinforce their role in the colonies as a result of the time and money they had contributed to acquiring North American territory. They did this through various tax acts such as the Townshend Acts that dramatically repealed any real sovereignty the colonies may have had. This was a undeniable change in the relations of the colonies with Britain as they had become so used to substantially conducting their own affairs. In turn, the colonies would then develop an aversion to the British because no one likes their power being taken away after they have been ignored for so long. While some factors of colonial life did not change, that does not attribute to a lesser importance of the French and Indian War. Their life was not exactly turned upside down, as it wasn't an immediate radical revolution. More so the war gave way for the cause of patriotism and provoked a need for independence the colonies had not seen before.

With the end of the French and Indian War came significant economic and social changes. Before, the British government held a policy of salutary neglect in which the colonies were not enforced strictly to parliamentary law and regulations so as to keep them obedient. However, in order to pay off their debt after the war, the unofficial policy was repealed by the implementation of the Navigation Acts and new taxes. This was clearly considered outrageous and ignored by the colonies because they had become accustomed to self-government and essentially felt themselves to be independent. Taxes such as the Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Townshend Acts, and Tea Act were imposed on the colonies as an aid for the reversal of salutary neglect. These Acts caused endless controversy in the colonies, as they responded with not only
boycotts and ignorance but also riots and violence. The British government also implemented a
change of land policy in the colonies with the Proclamation of 1763. It forbade settlement west
of the Appalachian Mountains, yet many ignored the law altogether. Just as with the taxation,
they were angered that Britain could force the colonies back under their will and enforce
conditions that they did not agree with. Such attitudes towards the policies of the British Crown
led to a more patriotic mindset in the colonies. This would impact the relations between America
and Great Britain immensely, for that mindset would be the common cause driving the colonies
towards independence.

Many aspects of culture in the colonies remained the same from the period before the war
to the period after including religion, mercantilism, jobs, and loyalty to Great Britain. The
religious revivals and diversity of the great awakening still impacted the colonies religious
pursuits from the beginning to the end of the war and ideas of the enlightenment prevailed
throughout it. This merely illustrates that religion was now its own entity in the colonies; that not
only was the Anglican faith not strictly enforced with British attempts to control the colonies but
also that deism was more accepted in the new communities. As the colonies still held their ties
with Britain after the war, the mercantilist system remained in place because it benefited both of
them. Therefore, many jobs were the same with the continuation of farming and trade with
European nations. The fact that there was not a total upheaval of the common lifestyle in the
colonies expresses that there was at least some desire to keep consistency in their routine despite
the changes that were occurring. Also due to remaining allegiant to Britain, there was still a vast
population of loyalists to the British crown among the colonies. Despite the uprising in patriot
ideals, many were fearful of severing ties with Great Britain and did not want to lose the opportunities the connection offered.

Continuity and change was prevalent in the period following the French and Indian War. Culture in the colonies was somewhat the same in that they held the same religion, followed the principles of mercantilism, had many of the same jobs, and remained connected to Britain. Nonetheless, American relations with Great Britain saw a significant change. With Britain's attempts to bring the colonies back under their control with the end of salutary neglect through taxation and land policies, patriotism and the desire for freedom soared. Perhaps the colonies cooperated with Britain in instances of government when Britain did not care, but the French and Indian War changed everything once Britain was involved again. Excellent paper.